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ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Energy and Environment)

MCWD to study if Cebu ideal for septage project

(Source: Cebu Daily News, 4/12/08)

The Metropolitan Cebu Water District (MCWD) will conduct a feasibility study if septage management is applicable in Cebu.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) tied up with the MCWD to conduct a feasibility study to find out the possibility of creating a dislodging scheme of the septic tanks in the different households and establishments in Metro Cebu.

Septage Management treats solid and liquid waste materials in the septic tanks before the wastes will be disposed of to avoid polluting or contaminating the water bodies.

United States Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney said they have to coordinate with the MCWD in its aim to promote and provide clean water to the city.

“If the study proves successful, the project will be launched here and we will be the pilot area for the Septage Management project in the country,” said MCWD general manager Armando Paredes.

Paredes said, “If we find septage management as a practical way to protect the waters, we would immediately implement it, especially that most of our water come from the ground.

The study, which costs more than \$10,000 (P410,000), will start within this month and end before the year ends.

“Instead of throwing the wastes or septages from the septic tanks, we will treat these first to avoid contamination,” Paredes said.

Septage is either disposed of at sewage treatment plants, landfill sites, dewatering trenches or waste stabilization lagoons.

MCWD has closed its two wells in Cebu City for monitoring after these were reported to have nitrate content.

The two wells are located in barangay Talamban and in the city proper.

“Nitrate is not that harmful to adults but to children, especially when it reaches harmful levels,” Paredes said.

Paredes said the water supply of MCWD is clean. It will only become harmful when it travels through contaminated pipeline or dirty faucet.

He urged the public to have their faucets and water containers clean.

The MCWD-USAID project is in line with the celebration of the International Year of Sanitation and Earth Day.

On Thursday, the Philippine Water Revolving Fund Support Program handed over the Septage management feasibility study work plan to Paredes and MCWD chairman Juan Saul Montecillo.

Ambassador Kenney stressed the need to educate the people especially children on the proper way of hand washing to address the increasing number of deaths caused by the lack of sanitation in the country.

MCWD supported Kenney and created a campaign program called Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) to help educate children on the importance of proper hand washing.

“We are planning to hold this annually to further stress the point to the children and to the households,” said Paredes.

Around 300 children from the Badjao community attended the WASH campaign the other day. Correspondent Marian Z. Codilla